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MEAN MACHINES SEGA

EXCLUSIVE!

RIDDLE ME THIS...

IS BATMAN FOREVER A BLOCKBUSTER?

WATERWORLD

IT'S FISH ON CHIPS!

INSIDE

DREDD TIPPED AND MAPPED

MEGADRIVE

DEMOLITION MAN

SATURN

PRIMAL RAGE

32X

BLACKHAWK

MEGA-CD

SURGICAL STRIKE

GAME GEAR

RETURN OF THE JEDI

BATMAN FO

BY ACCLAIM

GAME TYPE BEATEM UP

RELEASE OCTOBER

PRICE TBA

1-2 PLAYERS

24 MEG

COMPLETE

Batman Forever is the best film to hit the UK in ages, and needless to say there's a game in the offing, too. And with such a blockbuster set to fly in, it was always obvious who would get first dibs on the Megadrive version...

The first thing you saw when you walked into the South Hall during E3 was a huge video wall on the Acclaim stand. As a crap Gloria Estefan wannabe sang away, every now and then you could hear her say something like 'interactive entertainment, there's no way for containment' or some other such crap rhyme. But by far the best part of the video wall presentation were the plentiful clips from Batman Forever. Even as the businessmen tried to squeeze past the humungously fat sods who were wandering around aimlessly, they were stopped in their tracks by images of the Batmobile driving up a wall, Val Kilmer using a tube system to get from one place to another, and Tommy-Lee Jones and Jim Carey up to no good as Two-Face and The Riddler — in fact, as 'Gloria' sang: 'Batman Forever... a movie you must see; two major stars: Kilmer and Carreeeey...'

The MEAN MACHINES tip for biggest film of the year, Batman Forever is currently set to do huge business across the UK's cinema's and — as with Judge Dredd — Acclaim had the licence signed up long, long ago to ensure their game would be out soon after. After rumours galore regarding the game content, with stories telling of Scavenger putting together a Doom clone, Acclaim finally announced that Dredd stalwarts, Probe, were handling the coding duties to produce a game said to be 'a cross between MKII and nothing else you've seen.' The final game does indeed take the beat 'em up aspect of the classic Midway coin-op, but couples it with exploration aspects whereupon the Caped Crusader and Boy Wonder wander around a scrolling play area, picking fights with people immediately recognisable from the film. But there's a difference: Batman, his foes and the backdrops are all fully rendered, with the Megadrive somehow coping with loads of light-sourcing as the Dynamic Duo enter their latest video game excursion.

REVER

The bat twins head off together...

FIGHT!

Both Batman and Robin are armed with all manner of kicks and punches, most of which mirror those you'll see in the film. Depending on the proximity of foes and the type of move selected, over a dozen different offensive capabilities are afforded to each character. Thus, in addition to the expected kicks, punches and aerial assaults, a number of throws and leg sweeps are also on offer. Similarly, as can be expected of a guy with a utility belt, Batman also uses a number of gadgets to stop his foes in their tracks, with a glue gun sticking oncoming baddies to the floor, and grenades KO-ing them from a distance.

RIDDLE ME THIS...

MEAN MACHINES own selection of silly teasers:

Riddle me this:
What is purchased by the yard, and worn by the foot?

Riddle me that:
What is the best way to make a jacket last?

Riddle me this:
Does it fear the sun, or why does it behave so very shy?
It always right behind me goes

HOLY BAT-DROPS

Every backdrop in Batman Forever has been ray-traced, with the Megadrive's full palette used to give an unequalled level of depth. The rendering process is a long and drawn out one, though, with the graphic artists at Probe first scanning the videos sent by Acclaim US into an SGi machine and then drawing rough guide lines on all the key aspects — corners, recesses, etc. With these rough vectors ported, the lines are tidied up into an approximation of the backdrop, with every circles, line and triangle recreated in full. From here, the light source (or sources) is added to the mix, with the SG-i machine automatically generating where the shadows will fall. Whilst this sounds very easy, of all the aspects of Batman Forever, it is the rendering which takes the longest with Probe busying several workstations at once as they wait for the light-sourcing to appear.

Chicks love the car.

It takes more than an immobiliser to foil the Riddler.

When sunshine falls upon my nose.
'Tis mine as anyone can see;
It looks sometimes so much like me.

Riddle me that:
They are pretty and polished, but each one demands
A quite close inspection
Of faces and hands.
Yet you need never worry;
Their features will pass

A most careful inspection;
They're kept under glass.

Riddle me this:
What's the longest word in the English language?

Paul B has his morning pick-me-up.

Allo. allo. what's going on here them?

The Riddler's lair beckons.

BAT-BASICS

Batman Forever is a beat 'em up set across a number of settings immediately recognisable from the film. Acclaim's US development team were given free access to each of the movie's 70 sets, and toured each with a camcorder, making exhaustive notes of colour schemes, hidden passages and the like. This footage was then sent to Croydon-based Probe, who used it to create the game backdrops. Playing as either the Caped Crusader or the Boy Wonder, the player is left to battle through a series of eight-way-scrolling stages, fending off cronies sent by both the Riddler and Harvey 'Two-Face' Dent. Resembling an expanded Final Fight, BF mixes the expected kicking and punching action with tortuous platform levels, with the player requiring pixel-perfect kicks and timing in order to land on some of the smaller ledges. All in a day's work for the real Super Hero...

GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

Motion Capture is a phrase Acclaim are particularly proud to crow about. Basically, it is a mixture of real-life action and computer gubbins which allows Acclaim to create realistically-animated and full 3D sprites — all of which move like real people. By placing sensors all over a subject person and making them perform the moves needed for the game, with a computer making a note of the position of the sensors. With these points in order, a rough 3D skeleton can be built up allowing extra detail to be added. The benefit of this system is that, for games like Alien Trilogy where the screen flows around the player's character, only one — fully 3D — sprite is needed, as opposed to a number viewed from differing angles. The system has proved so successful, Warner Bros used it for a scene in the film where Batman falls several hundred feet into an alley — a stunt which would have left Val Kilmer decidedly pancake-like if attempted in real life!

Riddle me that:
What is it, that after you remove the whole, yet some still remains?

Riddle me this:
What is that that is brought to the table and cut, but never eaten?

Riddle me that:
What asks no questions but requires many answers?

Riddle me this:
What do we often catch, but never see?

Riddle me that:
At the beginning of eternity,
The end of time and space,
The start of every end,
The finish of every race.
Riddle me this:
What animal changes size twice a day?

Riddle me this:

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

As mentioned, Acclaim had access to the film's sets — and this invite from Warner Bros also allowed them to work with the film stuntmen. With the actors dressed up as a variety of Two-Face's hoodlums and thugs and performing rolls, punches and kicks. Similarly, costumes from the movie were then brought in for the actors playing the game versions of Batman, Robin, The Riddler and Two-Face, where more moves are used for each of the main characters. The action was then shot against a green backdrop with a camera filming. The tape was then sent to Probe where the game's graphic artists ported the footage to yet another SGI workstation for inclusion in the game. This system means that Batman Forever is one of the most graphically-intensive titles the Megadrive has ever seen.

Asylum sounds good to me.

Tee hee, pepper flavoured chewing gum.

The batmobile. Again.

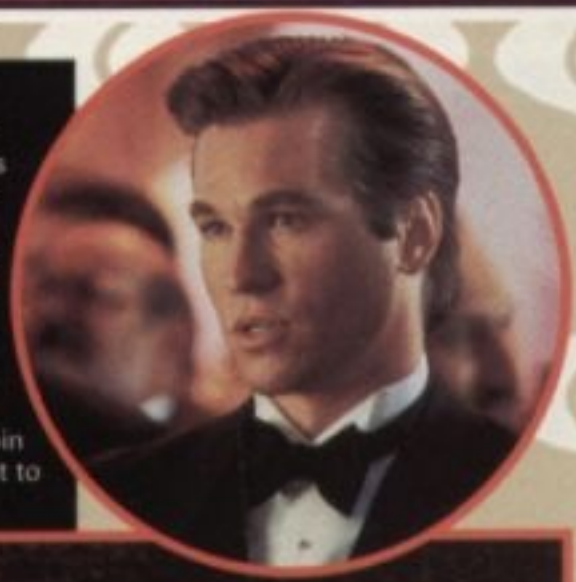
XGANGING UP

Batman and Robin's adventures take them from the streets of Gotham City, to the Batcave and eventually into the island retreat where both Two-Face and The Riddler are holed up. The game's plot follows that of the film almost identically, with Robin introduced into the plot much halfway through the game, unless he is chosen for the two-player team game. And if battling through and saving the day doesn't take your fancy, why not beat the hell out of your mates in the one-on-one game Probe have incorporated?

We are little airy creatures,
Of varied voice and features,
One of us is set in glass;
One of us you'll find in jet;
One of us is found in tin;
And the fourth a box is set within,
IOf the last you should pursue
IIt can never fly from you.

THE FILM

Quite simply, Batman Forever is one of the best films we at MEAN MACHINES have seen in ages. It features a new actor as Batman (Val Kilmer beating the pants off Michael Keaton's version), who is pitted against Two-Face (Tommy-Lee Jones) and The Riddler (Jim Carrey). The film starts with Bruce Wayne doing a tour of one of his many enterprises and meeting with a over-the-top scientist called Edward Nygma. Obsessed with Bruce Wayne, Nygma is desperate to please him and shows the multi-millionaire a device which will implant TV waves directly into the brain. Wayne is far from impressed, though, and fobs Nygma off telling him he is entering dangerous territory tinkering with the brain. Distraught at the brush-off, Nygma uses the machine on his condescending boss and absorbs most of the man's intelligence — a property he knew nothing about. Thus, having boosted his IQ he becomes The Riddler, and teams up with Two-Face in a quest to absorb the intelligence of everyone in Gotham, whilst satiating Two-Face's obsessive wish to kill off Batman. Then Robin enters the mix, but we don't want to spoil it for you...



VGHVHJBVJHB JHB K

Robin stands alone.